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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ON

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

IN SRI LANKA

Amnesty International has expressed grave concern about the large number of killings of civilian Tamils by the members of the Sri Lankan security forces and the government's failure to condemn or to order independent investigations into such killings.

In a 75-page Report on 'Extrajudicial Killings', Amnesty International has documented a mass of evidence including eyewitness accounts and photographs to establish beyond doubt that the Sri Lankan security forces have engaged in extrajudicial executions, more since July 1983, of a large number of civilians, particularly in the northern Tamil district of Jaffna.

In a press release, AI said that 'there had been a clear failure by the government to investigate security force killings adequately. To Amnesty International's knowledge there had been no criminal prosecutions of officials believed responsible for them, and in only one area was an inquest even held.

'Furthermore, extrajudicial killings have not been officially condemned,' it said. 'The government has merely stated that it 'does not condone' such killings of unarmed civilians or, in other cases, has sought to justify them by stating that civilians were killed during an 'exchange of fire' with 'terrorists', without however permitting inquest proceedings to be held.'

Coinciding with the release of its Report on June 18, the AI has urged President Jayawardene and his government to take effective preventive measures to stop deliberate killing of civilians by its security forces, to restrict the powers of arrest and detention under current emergency regulations, and to bring to justice those responsible through an impartial investigation.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NIRMALA ESCAPES TO FREEDOM

Mrs Nirmala Nithiyananthan, who had been held under the draconian Terrorism Act from November 1982, is reported to have escaped to freedom on June 10 from the jail situated in the eastern Tamil city of Batticaloa.

The Sri Lankan government version of Nirmala's escape said that six or seven people, some of whom were armed and dressed as prison guards, arrived at Batticaloa jail on the night of June 10 in two vehicles.

They said that they had brought a remand prisoner for admission and once inside they overpowered two prison guards and went to the female section and rescued Nirmala.

Nirmala, along with her husband Mr Nithiyananthan, a university don, and three Christian clergymen, was arrested in November 1982 and detained under the Sri Lankan Terrorism Act. Mr Nithiyananthan also escaped to freedom along with several other Tamil detainees when they broke jail in September 1983.

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Tamil TIMES

STATUTORY STATUS FOR SRI LANKA'S BICYCLE CHAIN BATTALION

Sri Lanka's new Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, has announced that he is setting up an entirely new wing of the armed forces to be mobilised into service during periods of internal strife in Sri Lanka.

Initially, 4,000 troops will be commissioned into this new force, which will function as the fourth wing of the armed services independent of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

It does not require a shrewd analysis by a military strategist to identify the true insignia of this 'fourth column'. It is no secret that a fourth wing has been functioning since President Jayawardene came into power, though it had no statutory status.

Hasn't one heard of the 'bicycle chain battalion' which broke up pickets, attacked trade unionists and killed Somapala? People have not forgotten how these goon squads attacked people like Professor Sarathchandra.

Didn't the 'fourth wing', not yet given statutory status but receiving ministerial protection, go down to Jaffna during the District Development Council elections in May 1981 to snatch ballot boxes which were later discovered under the beds of two Cabinet ministers who were staying at Subash Hotel, Jaffna?

Didn't they later gang up with the marauders of the Sri Lankan police to burn down the Jaffna City centre, including the Jaffna Public Library, in May-June 1981? Wasn't this 'goon regiment' employed to break up opposition meetings during the rigged referendum campaign?

Was it not this 'Devil's Brigade' that was engaged to attack the residences of Supreme Court judges when the police ensured that their telephones went mysteriously out of order?

And, finally, this 'fourth wing' comprising the private armies of Brigadiers Premadasa, Mathew, Athulathmudali and Dissanayake, graduated and qualified for official and statutory recognition when they killed and maimed thousands of Tamils, burnt them alive, raped their women, burnt their homes, destroyed their factories and plundered their property in an unprecedented orgy of violence in July-August 1983.

At all his recent public meetings, Athulathmudali has been announcing a 'secret plan' that his army was soon going to implement to wipe out the Tamil youth struggling against oppression.

While he exhorts his military death squads to wipe out without trace 'Tamil terrorists' – a synonym for all Tamils – Minister Mathew denounces the Tamil youth as 'rabid mad dogs' and demands that they be shot down.

And President Jayawardene declares that they are not even human beings. And yet, Athulathmudali, Mathew and Jayawardene are tolerant, compassionate and pious Buddhists!

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Premadasa has become the champion of the anti-Indian warmongering lobby, firing verbal missile after missile at India and Indira Gandhi from the safe and secure environs of Sri Lanka's super-salubrious new parliamentary complex, detonating, 'I challenge', 'Do you dare', 'Invade us if you will' type of bravado, representing more the lumpen diehards from the backyards of his Kehelwatte electorate than the lofty office of Prime Minister which rests uneasily upon him.

Having signally failed in their attempt to round up the Tamil militants, President Jayawardene and his new Minister of National Security are getting ready to launch a campaign of mass massacre of the Tamil youth population in the hope that at least one in a 100 so massacred will be a Tamil militant.

That is the 'secret plan' that Athulathmudali has been threatening to implement. That is the solution the despotic regime of President Jayawardene is offering to the trampled Tamils of Sri Lanka.

FROM PAGE 1

The Report documents in detail evidence in respect of the reported killing of some 234 Tamils in March and April this year since the appointment of a new Minister of National Security. In this regard, the AI report quotes the Government Agent of Jaffnaa, saying that 'hardly any of those killed by the army were linked with the guerrilla campaign for more autonomy for the Tamil majority', and that he 'spent more of his time trying to trace the people missing or detained.'

Photographs reproduced in the Report are pictures of unidentified bodies reportedly burnt by the army on April 10 or 11. Pointing out that identification of the dead and the circumstances in which persons were killed has become extremely difficult, the AI Report states: 'Such burnings, impeding identification and investigations into the circumstances in which deaths occurred, can enhance concern that these deaths were the result of extrajudicial killings by the security forces.'

Dealing with the killing of civilians by the armed forces in March and April this year, the AI Report states: 'Amnesty International has received several eyewitness accounts of the shootings on 28 March 1984 resulting in the death of eight persons at Chunnakam market and one at Mallakam. These accounts identify Air Force personnel getting down from a truck and a van, who opened fire at random, shooting into the crowded market at civilians.'

'Like on previous occasions, inquest proceedings were reportedly waived in all eight cases. The government's refusal to permit inquests to be held can only enhance concerns that these were in fact unprovoked extrajudicial killings. This is especially so since, in

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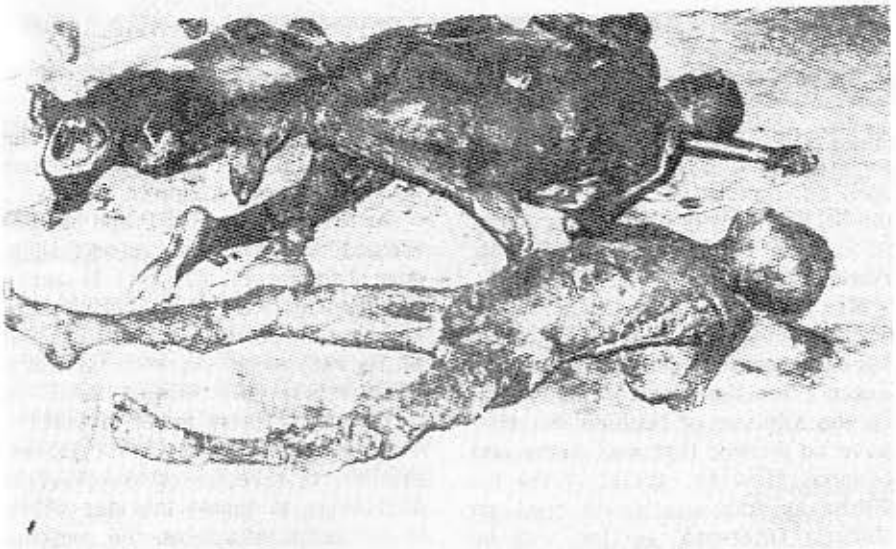

Bodies in such a state . . . no identification could be made

spite of the government's official version of the Chunnakam market incident, according to which those killed were shot dead by air force personnel in legitimate self-defence, the statements of eyewitnesses received by Amnesty International would appear to indicate on the contrary that the seven shot dead in Chunnakam market and the one man subsequently shot dead in a shop at Mallakam died as a result of deliberate random shooting by Air Force personnel.'

'Between 9 and 12 April 1984 a number of violent incidents took place in and around Jaffna and during these days dozens of Tamils were killed by the security forces — estimates of the numbers killed and the circumstances in which they died varying widely even according to official sources.'

'The Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, has put the total number of persons killed between 9 and 12 April at 32, stating that all were 'terrorists'. However, Amnesty International notes that another government official, the Government Agent for Jaffna, is quoted as saying that "more than 50" people were killed and that "hardly any of those killed by the army were linked with the guerrilla campaign for more autonomy for the Tamil minority".

'He was also reported as saying that he spent more of his time trying to trace people missing or detained since last week's events. In the same press reports, Mr L. Rajasingham, President of the Jaffna Citizens Committee, estimated the number of people killed to be 234, stating that most victims were bystanders killed in random shootings by soldiers after the attacks by Tamil extremists.

'The Secretary of the Ministry of Information, Douglas Liyanayage, in the same Reuters report, dismissed the figure of 234, but also acknowledged that there could be innocent civilians among the dead. He was quoted as saying, "I cannot tell you that every person killed was a terrorist".

'Amnesty International has the names of 30 persons killed between 9 and 12 April.'

'It has been pointed out that identification of the dead and the circumstances in which persons were killed has become extremely difficult in view of the army reportedly burning the bodies of several people shot dead by them. According to one of the statements received by Amnesty International:

"My son . . . left home at about 7.30am on 11.4.84 saying that he was going for tuition but has failed to return home so far . . . we made a search for him . . . My son's friends reported having seen my son in the Jaffna town area on 11.4.84. Hence I visited all the spots where it was reported that dead bodies were lying. But the bodies were in such a state, some partly burnt, some charred and faces disfigured, that no identification could be made . . ."

'Amnesty International has received nine other statements from relatives of persons who left home between 9 and 12 April and who are still 'missing', relatives stating they fear these persons were killed by the army, and their bodies burnt by them.'

Identifying the army

'Amnesty International has received reports that such burnings took place at Villoondi, Chemmani and Mandativu, most reports identifying the army as responsible for the burnings. However, two reports received by Amnesty International allege that at the Chemmani cemetery, the police burnt the bodies of people shot by the army. The father of one man, who had left home on 9 April, and who is still "missing", stated that he had been told so by the police themselves:

"Subsequently, on Friday 13.4.84 I lodged an entry at the Jaffna Police Stations that my son . . . was missing. An officer in the police dept. told me that most of the bodies of persons shot by the army personnel were at Chemmany cemetery . . .'

MOSSAD COMES TO SRI LANKA

Months ago, *Tamil Times* received reports that operatives from the Israeli Secret Service were engaged in training Sri Lankan security personnel at Mannampitiya. When the government of Sri Lanka recently announced the opening of the 'Israeli Interests Section' in Colombo, it was only legitimising the de facto presence for months of Mossad, the Israeli Secret Service, personnel.

The talks and plans to re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel, which were broken off 14 years ago, had been going on for several months. But the government, which was heavily dependent on trade with and loans from Arab countries and foreign exchange earnings from the thousands of Sri Lankans working in Middle Eastern countries, had to be careful about falling foul of the Arab countries. Then the United States came to the government's rescue with the diplomatic device of an 'Israeli Interests Section within the US Embassy'.

Device to hoodwink

The fact that Israel will set up its full Mission in Colombo under the guise of an 'interests section', which is only a device to hoodwink the Arab countries and the Muslim population of Sri Lanka. However, Mr Ronald Oppen, Public Affairs Officer of the US Embassy in Colombo, let the cat out of the bag when he told the *Ceylon Daily News* (as reported in the *Sri Lanka News*, May 31), 'Israel will open an 'interests section in Sri Lanka shortly. This is totally an Israeli government operation and they will not be operating from US Embassy premises or using American personnel.'

Mr Oppen added that this was a diplomatic device set up by the Vienna Convention and is customarily

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used when two governments have no diplomatic or consular representation. He said that this matter had been under discussion for some time between the governments of Israel and Sri Lanka.

He added that further details on the specifics of the relationship between the two countries should be obtained from representatives of the two governments.'

Although the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr Sahul Hameed (himself a Muslim), refused to answer repeated questions in Parliament from opposition MPs as to whether personnel from the dreaded 'Mossad' would be among those employed in the 'Israeli Interests Section', President Jayawardene was more forthcoming.

Israeli assistance

He told a news conference in Hong Kong that the Sri Lankan government would accept help from the Devil himself to break the back of the terrorists. He revealed that Israeli assistance was being obtained to combat terrorism and that the Israeli Security Organisation Mossad was among those helping the Colombo government.

'We haven't been able to get the United States, Britain and India to help us. We have to get help from somewhere. We can't be political waifs,' he said (as reported in *Sri Lanka News*, June 7).

An opposition MP observed: General Attygala has told the representative of the International Commission of Jurists, Mr Paul Sieghart, that there are only 15 or 20 hard-core "Tigers". All of these Tamil guerrillas put together, there can't be more than 150 or 200.

'Of course, they have attacked some of our security personnel and even killed them. They have also raided some banks. What else have they done? In return, our security forces have also killed many of them and tragically many Tamil civilians too.

'We have at least 17,000 in the police force; at least about 12,000 in the armed forces. The government has also announced the recruitment of some 4,000 home guards. They have bought gunships from Taiwan; lots of weapons from Pakistan and helicopter gunships from the United States. Now they are calling in the Israeli Mossad. All this for what? To fight a few "Tigers"! The way the government is acting, I won't be surprised if they call in the American Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean and the Seventh Fleet from the Pacific. The government has become paranoid.'

SLFP CONDEMNS 'ISRAEL MISSION' MOVE

SLFP President Sirima Bandaranaike has described the move to open an 'Israeli interests' section at the US Embassy in Colombo as a slap in the face of the Arab and Islamic community.

Mrs Bandaranaike states: 'When Mr Lakshman Jayokody, SLFP Member of Parliament for Attanagalla, asked a question about Israel recently, the Minister of National Security gave an answer that was vague and evasive. Now an official of the US Embassy has confirmed that an 'Israeli Interests' section will be established soon in Colombo under what he described as 'the protecting power' of the US.

'Whatever the explanations and whichever the quarter they come from, it is clear that the UNP government has given a slap in the face to the Arab and Islamic community, and the non-aligned world.

'Only a very small number of non-aligned member states have diplomatic relations with Israel — a country which has time and time again violated decisions of the Security Council of the United Nations and has shown scant respect for world opinion or humanitarian considerations. In any event, what the people of Sri Lanka must fully understand is that this step is an open repudiation of a policy adopted by the United Front government in 1970 and followed for more than 13 years.

'The correctness of the decision taken by my government is manifestly evident in the large benefits that have accrued to the people of this country, especially in recent years. Now this opportunistic and desperate government is wantonly risking the loss of those benefits and choosing to insult the countries whose friendship and gratitude, earned by our principled support for the Palestinian and Arab cause against Zionism, brought Sri Lanka those benefits.

'Ministers of this government, particularly those who claim to be champions of the Sinhala Buddhists often complain that the Sinhala Buddhist youth have few opportunities for working abroad. It is precisely because of our pro-Arab, anti-Zionist policy that well over a lakh of Sri Lankans, the vast majority of them Sinhala Buddhists, have found employment in these Arab-Islamic countries.

'The Arab world is our main oil supplier and this fact is all the more important at a time when there is a war in the Gulf. Our Arab oil suppliers have often given us concessions. The Arab world is the biggest buyer of our tea. It has been a source of aid.

'As leader of the SLFP and head of the government which orderd the closure of the Israeli Mission I denounce this decision which may only lead to bringing the Arab-Israeli conflict and all its violence to our homeland at a time when this island itself is threatened with so much violence.

'I call on all patriotic forces, regardless of race, creed and political affiliations, to oppose this step which is a blatant attack on the national interests of Sri Lanka and its people.'

LSSP ALSO CONDEMNS

The leader of the LSSP, Dr Colvin R. de Silva, in a statement said yesterday: 'The government's secretive attempt to get on the road to re-establishing diplomatic relations with Israel does not surprise the LSSP. The move accords with the trend of UNP politics.

'The move towards Israel is in fact a part of the government's larger move away from non-alignment, towards alignment with American imperialism, especially in Asia. It is not irrelevant that the Israeli 'Centre' is to be located within the US Embassy, the USA being Israel's 'protecting power' in this matter. It is surely also significant that this move comes on the eve of President J.R. Jayewardene's official state visit to the USA.

Anti-imperialist

'Militarily, Israeli power is also a projection of US power in the Middle East. The major anti-imperialist force in the Middle East is the Arab masses, who are also in conflict with Zionism. The LSSP's firm participation in the decision of the United Front government in 1970 to sever diplomatic relations with Israel stemmed principally from that consideration.

'No reason has arisen in the meantime to change that decision. On the contrary, the behaviour of both US imperialism and Israel in the Middle East during this period has amply borne out the correctness of that decision. The alleged needs of the UNP government's offensive against the Eelamists in the North and East of Sri Lanka do not suffice to displace that decision in any manner.

'The LSSP condemns this act of the government and calls upon all progressive forces in Sri Lanka to resist it.'

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SRI LANKA: A MOUNTING TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

TERRORISM ACT, AN UGLY BLOT ON ANY CIVILISED SOCIETY — ICJ

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

The March 1984 Report of the International Commission of Jurists describes the Sri Lankan Prevention of Terrorism act as 'an ugly blot on the statute book of any civilised country'. Having subjected the provisions of the Act to close scrutiny, the Report states:

'These provisions are quite extraordinarily wide. No legislation conferring even remotely comparable powers is in force in any other free democracy operating under the Rule of Law, however troubled it may be by politically motivated violence. Indeed, there is only one known precedent for the power to impose restriction orders under Section 11 of the Sri Lankan PTA, and that – as Professor Leary rightly pointed out in her Report – is comparable legislation currently in force in South Africa. To a developing country of the Commonwealth like Sri Lanka, which has happily now ratified (as Professor Leary recommended) the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and has played an important role in the condemnation of the South African regime and all its contemptible works, it must be deeply wounding to have that comparison made publicly by a foreign observer, however distinguished and impartial. I am naturally reluctant to re-open that wound, but I have no choice but to endorse Professor Leary's conclusion. Such a provision is an ugly blot on the statute book of any civilised country.' page 33)

UK Act compared

Dismissing the Sri Lankan government's claim that the PTA was similar to those enactments in 'other democratic countries such as United Kingdom, Canada and Australia', and having compared the sharp differences between the UK Act and the Sri Lankan Act, the Report states:

'In fact, under the UK Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act, currently being re-enacted by the UK Parliament with some modifications,

(1) the special powers are attracted by 'acts of terrorism', narrowly defined as 'the use of violence for political ends', including 'any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear' — and not by a very wide range of 'unlawful activities' as in the Sri Lankan Act;

(2) the maximum period during which anyone may be detained without charge is 7 days — as opposed to 18 months;

(3) there is no power to make any 'restriction orders';

(4) there is no power to prohibit any publication in any newspaper;

(5) no one could be sent to prison for up to 20 years and could not be sentenced to less than 5) for causing mischief to public property, or defacing public notices, nor could his property be forfeited for any offence;

(6) the Act only remains in force for 12 months unless Parliament renews it.' (page 34)

'However, despite the far higher level of political terrorism in Northern Ireland, even that statute confers no powers to make restriction orders, or to prohibit publications; the powers of detention without trial which it does confer have not been exercised for ten years; and the entire Act is a measure which can remain in effect only during the currency of a proclaimed emergency: it is not a permanent feature of the UK Statute Book.' (page 35)

Referring to the 'sustained criticism from many quarters about the manner in which the Sri Lankan PTA had been applied in practice', the Report states:

'Whenever a statute of this kind confers discretion on responsible members of the Executive to detain individuals, or to make other adverse decisions about them which will not be subject to review by the courts, it is of paramount importance that the Ministers or officials concerned exercised their powers with great care, and scrutinise as critically as they can the applications for such an exercise which will be put before them by the security forces.

'According to the Sri Lankan PTA, detention orders under Section 9 and restrictions orders under Section 11 are all to be made by 'the Minister', who is in fact the Minister of Defence, a portfolio held by the President. In practice, however, they are made by his Deputy, the Minister for Internal Security who in turn acts on the advice of the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, though I understand that he may also receive independent advice from the Inspector-General of Police and the Special Branch.

'I confess I did not gain the impression from either the Deputy Minister or the Secretary that they submitted the applications made to them by the security forces to any real degree of critical and independent scrutiny.

'For example, one individual had been held in detention under the Act without charge since the previous June — that is, for the best part of seven months by the time of my visit — because, so I was told, the police had still not been able to complete their inquiries into the case in which he was believed to be concerned. Yet, neither the Secretary nor the Deputy Minister appeared to have taken any great pains to enquire why, after so long a time, that investigation had still not been concluded.

'I am regretfully left with the impression that neither the Secretary nor the Minister in practice do much more than accede to the routine applications that are put before them, without either testing the case that is put, or laying down firm policy directives which will ensure that they do not receive requests based on unjustifiable delay.

'But it is simply not good enough to seek to overcome these administrative problems by amassing detainees who are held on mere suspicion by some police officer of "unlawful activity" and have not been charged with any offence — still less when they are being detained merely in the hope that they will become informants.' (page 37)

'The Deputy Minister is himself a former police officer. His position, as conveyed to me when we met, is that he is sorry if anyone is inconvenienced as a result of such shortcomings, but that he cannot risk releasing people before police enquiries are fully completed. In my respectful view, that just will not do.

Torture allegations

'A power to detain suspects for long periods without the opportunity for access by friends, family, or lawyers, or for regular judicial review, notoriously carries the danger that the detainees will be maltreated while in custody: it provides an invitation for deprivation, assault, and worse — especially if the

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suspects may be detained by their interrogators in police stations or army camps, and more especially still if no real control is exercised over the periods for which they are detained.

'That point has been frequently and forcibly made about the Sri Lankan PTA by the ICJ, Amnesty International, and many others. Amnesty in particular has investigated and reported a number of well-documented allegations of the torture of detainees under the PTA, which the Sri Lankan government has later denied in general terms. But so long as suspects can be held incommunicado for long periods by their interrogators, those allegations will continue to be made — and, the world being what it is, some of them will be well-founded, even if the use of violence in the course of interrogation is not official policy at the highest level.

'There were, for example, the cases in 1981 where the Sri Lankan Court of Appeal found as a fact that detainees had been assaulted. And there is the still unexplained death in army custody in April 1983 of K.T. Navaratnarajah, who was found by the investigating Magistrate to have died of numerous external and internal injuries inflicted by blows and weapons — though no one has to this day been charged with his murder, even though the Magistrate returned a verdict of homicide.' (page 38)

Asserting that the PTA and Emergency Regulations derogate from many of the rights under the International Covenant in Civil and Political Rights, the Report states:

'On the face of it, the Sri Lankan PTA derogates from many of the rights which Sri Lanka is bound, as a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights since 11 June 1980, to respect and ensure for all its inhabitants: the right to liberty and security of person and the freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention (Article 9); freedom of movement and choice of residence (Article 12); the right to a free trial and the rights of defence (Article 14); freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19); the rights of assembly (Article 21) and association (Article 22); and the right to take part in public affairs (Article 25). The Emergency Regulations also derogate from many of these rights.' (page 46)

Pointing out that in order to justify derogations under the International Covenants, there must both be an emergency in fact and it must be officially proclaimed, and noting that the PTA is in operation even during times of no 'officially proclaimed emergency', the Report states:

'Since there is no dispute that the provisions of the Sri Lankan PTA derogate gravely from the rights of individuals guaranteed under many of the Covenant's substantive Articles, it follows in my view that Sri Lanka is in breach of its international obligations so long as that Act remains on its statute book in its present form, and no emergency has been officially proclaimed in the country.' (page 49)

Size & scale of 'terrorism'

Challenging the claim by the Sri Lankan government that 'so long as the current level of terrorism perpetrated by the Tamil Tigers persists, there is in fact a "public emergency threatening the life of the nation", and proceeding to assess the 'size and scale of terrorism', the Report states:

'General Attygala, an experienced and distinguished soldier who was formerly in command of the Sri Lankan army, and has now been in overall charge of the entire security operation against the Tamil Tigers for more than six months, told me that he believed that their hard core numbered no more than about 25 or 30, with perhaps another 100 to 150 on their periphery. This tallies with the number of around 200 which Professor Leary was given in 1981 by the then Secretary to the Department of Justice.

'The damage done by the Tigers is more accurately ascertainable: according to the official figures from the time they began their bloody work in April 1978 to October 1983 they had killed 87 people, of whom 51 were police officers or soldiers, 9 politicians, 13 potential witnesses, and 14 others; they have also inflicted damage to property, and robbed several banks.

'At the same time, there has been equally tragic loss of life in reprisal. In July 1979, six Tamil youths disappeared: two were later found dead and mutilated; one died in a prison hospital; and the remaining three have never been found.

'Following the report on this affair by a Parliamentary Select Committee under the chairmanship of Mr Lalith Athulathmudali MP, the then Minister for Trade and Shippping, grave suspicion continues to rest on the police. Five more Tamils were killed when the police went on a rampage in Jaffna on the night of 3/4 June 1981. The representative of Sri Lanka appearing before the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in Geneva in August 1983 admitted that, of the Tamils who lost their lives during the communal violence of July and August of that year, 37 had been killed by members of the security forces: the government has since revised that figure upwards, to 51.

'A further 53 Tamils were murdered at that time in Welikada prison in Colombo, where they were held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, either in detention or on remand. That makes a total, from official sources alone, of at least 112 individuals killed either by members of the State's own security forces, or while in the State's custody. (page 51)

Disappearance of detainees

'Unofficial reports increase that number. According to Mr Moore's report of July 1983, not less than 23 individuals had died in custody since July 1979, and a further four had 'disappeared'. The Tamil leader and Member of Parliament, Mr Amirthalingam, has said that 51 Tamils have been killed over an unspecified period in 'unreported incidents'. It may of course be that some of these lives were taken by the security forces in actual or

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perceived self-defence, but as there has never been a public and independent inquiry into most of these deaths, that must remain a matter for speculation. And it certainly cannot be the explanation for the death in army custody, from multiple external and internal injuries inflicted by blows and weapons, of K.T. Navaratnarajah on 10 April 1983, where the investigating Magistrate brought in a verdict of homicide on 31 May 1983 (three days before Emergency Regulation 15A was made), but no one has yet been charged.

Every single death by violence must be lamented whoever perpetrates it. There can be no excuse for it, and all governments must do what they can to prevent it. But no nation anywhere in the world can ever hope to be entirely free of violence: in every society there will be at least a few who commit murder from greed, passion, rage, mental derangement — or, sometimes, misguided political motives. The question is at what level such kilings take on the quality of a "public emergency threatening the life of the nation".

'The Sri Lankan authorities have consistently taken the view that the current level of violence perpetrated by the Tamil Tigers does constitute such a public emergency. I am satisfied that they hold that view honestly, and are motivated by a genuine concern for the life of Sri Lankan citizens, and not by any malign, political or other extraneous concerns. Nonetheless, I am forced to the conclusion that they are mistaken in that judgement.

'The Tamil Tigers are, it is conceded, only a tiny group of violent youths in a fundamentally peaceful population of nearly 15 million. They have taken on average, around 16 lives a year, almost all among people whom they either see as their armed oppressors, or as traitors to their own community, and entirely within a few small areas in the island. (By comparison, the toll of deaths from terrorism in Northern Ireland over the same period — 217 members of the security forces, and 275 civilians — has averaged 90 per annum in a population just one tenth of the size of Sri Lanka: that is, a rate per capita 57 times as high.) Unlike other and better known terrorist groups in other parts of the world, the Tamil Tigers are relatively unsophisticated, as Mr Moore explains in his report. While one must have every sympathy for their victims, and for the problems of those who carry the burden of responsibility for safeguarding the lives and safety of the island's population, I cannot see that this level of violence can properly be described (in the words of the European Court of Human Rights) as 'an exceptional situation of crisis or emergency which affects the whole population and constitutes a threat to the organised life of the community of which the State is composed' — nor that, even if it did fall within that definition, the provisions of the PTA or of Emergency Regulation 15A are anything other than grossly disproportionate to the threat presented, and far more than is 'strictly required by the exigencies of the situation.'

PTA unjustified

'On all these grounds, I am therefore driven to the conclusion that both the PTA and Emergency Regulation 15A are unjustified in law and in fact, and that emergency rule throughout Sri Lanka can only be justified on those occasions when there are acute and large-scale outbreaks of violence such as those of July/August of last year, and then only for a brief period until that situation has been brought under control. It could not, on that test, have been justified at the time of the referendum in December 1982 to extend the life of Parliament without a general election, when it was used to ban publications opposing the proposal.' (page 53)

Attack on the judiciary

Referring to attacks on the judiciary and specifically to the promotions granted personally by President J.R. Jayawardene to two police officers who had been found 'guilty' of violating the fundamental rights of two named citizens in different cases, the Report accuses that 'the President' has on the basis of his own admission fallen well short of that high responsibility' and holds his act 'inexcusable'.

Referring to the organised mob attack on the residences of the judges who found the police officer involved in the Vivienne Goonewardene case (violation of her fundamental rights provided for in the Constitution) 'guilty', the Report states that 'the Judges of the Supreme Court who had heard this case found their private houses surrounded by unruly mobs, shouting obscenities at them. It was a frightening experience and no policeman was in sight. They tried to telephone the police, but found the lines mysteriously out of order.'

Casting doubt about the Prime Minister's undertaking to carry out 'a rigorous investigation of these incidents', the Report sarcastically comments, '. . . and although the mobs arrived in public service buses and the disorders had clearly been organised in a concerted fashion, no one seems to have managed to this day to unearth anyone responsible; apparently, the relevant records of the bus station concerned have somehow been lost'. On this matter, the Report concludes: 'Such events are hardly calculated to encourage the judiciary to remain independent, or to enhance public respect for its members, their judgments, or the Rule of Law.'

Immunity from all suits

In regard to the President's role in relation to the judiciary, the Report states:

'The conclusion is inescapable that he was deliberately seeking to teach the judges a lesson, in order to make them more pliable to the Executive's wishes. If that is so, these were grossly improper acts; but for the immunity from all suits which the President enjoys under Article 35(1) of the Constitution, they might well have been criminal offences under Article 16(2).' (page 60)

'The President's powers under the Constitution are exceptionally wide for a free democracy under the Rule of Law, and a heavy duty is therefore cast upon him to exercise them only with a very high degree of responsibility; never capriciously, and never in a fashion which will undermine confidence in the national institutions which the Constitution itself creates — above all, the Supreme Court as guardian of the fundamental rights declared and recognised by the Constitution itself. I find it a matter of regret that, in this instance, the President has, on the basis of his own admissions, fallen well short of that high responsibility. What he did may be understandable, but it is not excusable.' (page 61)

Monkeying with the Constitution

Pointing out that a Constitution of a country should 'be immune from cynical change for short-term party political advantage', the Report reminds 'the underlying principle that constitutions should never be amended for mere party political advantage by a party that happens to wield enough power, and that it is vital to avoid the dangers of what de Tocqeville long ago called 'the tyranny of the majority'. The Report accuses 'both the major political parties in Sri Lanka (UNP and SLFP) of having 'failed to observe that important principle'.

Observing that the 'situation has deteriorated even further' under the UNP, the Report charges President Jayawardene of enacting the Third Amendment to enable him 'to go pre-

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maturely to the country for his re-election as President', and pushing through the Fourth Amendment to extend the life of Parliament by six years in 'order to maintain his overwhelming parliamentary majority at a time when he may have had reason to think that its popular support was beginning to wane'.

Worst of all, the Sixth Amendment (banning parties which advocated 'separatism') was rushed through Parliament at a time of high tension and violence, with the effect of removing from it the major remaining opposition to President Jayawardene's administration, depriving the Tamil community of the full part in the democratic process to which it is entitled.'

Summing up on the many constitutional amendments enacted by President Jayawardene, the Report states:

'Taken together with the successful attempt, through the device of a Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry, to decapitate the SLFP opposition by depriving its popular leader, Mrs Bandaranaike, of all opportunities for campaigning for public office . . . these manoeuvres bear every appearance of being designed to keep Mr Jayawardene and his UNP in power at all costs, regardless of the wishes of any section of the electorate.

'That is an understandable motive for any political party, whose leaders may well be genuinely convinced that only chaos and national disaster would follow their fall from power. But what is quite illegitimate is to use the device of constitutional amendments for that purpose, merely because the accident of electoral counting happens to have produced a sufficient majority in Parliament to achieve that end. To amend constitutions in those circumstances is to degrade their status to that of ordinary laws, subject to adventitious Parliamentary majorities, when the whole purpose of such an instrument is that it should be immune to such manoeuvres.

'One painful lesson that has had to be learnt by the few nations that have succeeded in maintaining free democracies for any length of time is that constitutions must never be amended except by a wide consensus among political interests which may legitimately disagree on many things, but can come together on constitutional changes when these are really essential. That is a lesson which both the major parties in Sri Lankan politics have so far failed to learn while they were in power; that failure has often rebounded on them when they have found themselves out of power; and it has also been the cause of some of Sri Lanka's current troubles, and may yet prove to be the cause of even worse troubles hereafter.' (pages 86, 87)

Conclusion

'Sri Lanka: A Mounting Tragedy of Errors' is essential reading for anyone concerned with questions of human rights. As far as the Sri Lankan government and President Jayawardene are concerned, the ICJ Report constitutes a devastating indictment. It is rarely that an invited guest, who had enjoyed the hospitality of his host, charges his host with 'misjudgement of monumental proportions', 'grossly improper acts' amounting to criminal offences; of having 'fallen well short of that high responsibility' of his office, and 'inexcusable' conduct. The guest in this instance is Mr Paul Sieghart, chairman of Justice (British section of the International Commission of Jurists).

The fact that his status as a guest of the Sri Lankan President did not make even the slightest impact upon his sturdy independence and objectivity only serves to enhance the quality of the Report and the character of its author.

As for President Jayawardene, he must be regretting that Mr Paul Sieghart is not a judge of the Sri Lankan Supreme Court. If he was, by now the President would have got his steamroller majority in Parliament to appoint a Select Committee to investigate the conduct of Mr Sieghart. Also, it would have been highly probable that organised mobs would have attacked him in his private residence. He could not have been able to seek police assistance, for his telephone would have been mysteriously out of order!

THE ANIMAL & INSECT ACT 1984

by CECIL RAJENDRA*

Finally, in order to ensure absolute national security they passed the Animal & Insect Emergency Control & Discipline Act.

Under this new Act, buffaloes, cows and goats were prohibited from grazing in herds of more than three. Neither could birds flock, nor bees swarm . . . This constituted unlawful assembly.

As they had not obtained prior planning permission, mud-wasps and swallows were issued with summary Notices to Quit. Their homes were declared subversive extensions to private property. Monkeys and Mynahs were warned to stop relaying their noisy morning orisons until an official Broadcasting Licence was issued by the appropriate Ministry.

Unmonitored publications & broadcasts posed the gravest threats in times of a National Emergency.

Similarly, woodpeckers had to stop tapping their morse-code messages from coconut tree-top to chempaka tree.
All messages were subject to a thorough pre-scrutiny by the relevant authorities.

Java sparrows were arrested in droves (for rumour-mongering).

Cats (suspected of conspiracy) had to be indoors by 9 o'clock. Cicadas and crickets received notification to turn their amplifiers down. Ducks could not quack nor turkeys gobble during restricted hours. Need I say, all dogs – alsations, daschunds, terriers, pointers and even little chihuahuas – were muzzled.

In the interests of security, penguins and zebras were ordered to discard their non-regulation uniforms.
The deer had to surrender their dangerous antlers.
Tigers and all carnivors with retracted claws were sent directly to prison for concealing lethal weapons.

And by virtue of Article Four, paragraph 2(b), sub-Section sixteen, under no circumstances were elephants allowed to break wind between the hours of six and six. Their farts could easily be interpreted as gunshot. Might spark off a riot . . .

A month after the Act was properly gazetted the birds and insects started migrating south, the animals went north and an eerie silence handcuffed the forests.

There was now Total Security.

*** Cecil Rajendra is Malaysia's most acclaimed poet**

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MIRJE CONDEMNS ARMY'S HAVOC OF MURDER & ARSON

The Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality has issued a statement deploring the killing of over 200 men and women and setting ablaze a large number of properties in the northern Tamil city of Jaffna in Sri Lanka.

The statement entitled 'STOP THE REPRESSION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE NORTH AND GRANT A JUST, POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION' accuses the government of 'militaristic policies' which 'may unavoidably push even the thousands of people who hitherto have remained neutral, into taking extreme action', and calls upon the government to appoint an independent commission of inquiry.

The following is the full text of the MIRJE statement:

'We deplore the military attacks launched by the government, in the past few weeks, against the Tamil people living in the North and East of the Island. Up until now, it has been reported that more than two hundred men and women, young and old, have been killed. The government itself has admitted that strong measures have been taken to suppress the 'Terrorists'. However, as a result, the havoc created in Jaffna is of no small scale.

'Informed sources also report the gutting of shops and such highly outrageous incidents as the burning of dead bodies on the streets amidst thousands of onlookers. Further, the arresting of a large number of young men and women and the withholding of information regarding their whereabouts has become common practice.

'Government claims that many Terrorists have been killed in confrontations whilst the armed forces have suffered no casualties, appear to be a mystery. When it is questionable whether one can identify terrorists in the midst of ordinary people, the prowess of our Army to so accurately spot terrorists could well be a skill possessed by no other army in the world.

'However, the militaristic policies pursued by the government in the North, may unavoidably push even the thousands of people who hitherto have remained neutral into taking extreme action. That a mass of outraged ordinary people had come out on the streets and attacked the Naga Vihara and the Sinhala Maha Vidyalaya might be just the initial manifestation of this.

'It is pertinent here to bear in mind that at no time in history has it been possible for any ruler to reign for long, subjugating a people with military might. The government has been unable to prevent the successive anti-Tamil pogroms of 1977, '79, '81 and '83. Apart from everything else, it even failed to prevent the cold-blooded murder of 53 prisoners in its custody.

'The government has now given the armed forces unlimited powers to suppress 'terrorism' and in effect created a military administration in Jaffna. The Round Table Conference convened to find a political solution, has been prolonged in uncertain fashion making it incapable of coming to a decision. This has resulted in disillusioning even those who had some hope of a positive outcome from the RTC. Does not all this serve to prove that the authorities have no real interest and no real political will to solve the Tamil National Question?

'Narrow racist hysteria can no longer be allowed to destroy human life and valuable property. Similarly, attempts to push people into barbarism whilst spouting speeches of great cultural heritages must be defeated.

'Therefore, we say that all relevant political parties should at least now take steps to provide a just political solution through determined discussions sincerely acknowledging the Tamil national question as a political question.

'We wish to point out that it is the responsibility of those who value humanity to cease fire and commence fruitful discussion in order to secure a solution that will pave the way for inter-racial justice and equality.

'Furthermore, if the government does not condone the killing of innocent people we earnestly urge the appointment of an independent commission of inquiry to investigate how a large scale massacre of this nature occurred and to punish those guilty.'

Two persons arrested

Two young persons, Mr Karunadasa and Mr Thambiah, have been arrested by the Panwila Police on May 3rd 1984. Apparently, they had distributed copies of a leaflet published by the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) calling for an end to repression in the North and for a just political solution to the National Question.

Those two persons have been held in police custody for nearly two weeks and the Officer-in-Charge at the Panwila Police Station has stated that he was holding them on the instructions of his superior officers. All attempts to ascertain who had given such orders and on what grounds, including several inquiries to the Office of the Inspector-General of police, have been unsuccessful.

While Mr Athulalmudali, Minister of National Security, in his speech at the Electricity Board lamented the absence of public discussion on the nature of the political solution that could be adopted, the action of the police in arresting these two young persons shows that any attempt to express an opinion on this questions would run the risk of repressive action by the state.

Mr R. Prins Rajasuriya, has, on behalf of the MIRJE, appealed to all organisations and individuals who value democratic rights to urge the government to release these two persons immediately.

VASU RELEASED

Vasudeva Nanayakkara, the leader of the Nava Sama Samaja Party and its secretary Dr Wickremabahu Karunaratne have been released from detention.

In the middle of the July 1983 anti-Tamil violence, the NSSP along with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and Communist Party (Moscow) were proscribed by the government which ordered that their leaders be arrested and detained under the emergency. The JVP and NSSP leaders went into hiding on August 2, 1983, fearing that they might suffer the same fate as the 53 Tamil prisoners who were brutally murdered within the prison.

The government offered a reward of Rs.150,000 for any information leading to the arrest of Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Rohana Wijeweera (the JVP leader) and other leaders of these parties. However, they successfully evaded detection.

However, at the end of May, the two NSSP leaders, Vasudeva and Karunaratne, on their own surfaced and surrendered to the police and they were promptly detained.

Now they have both been released without any charges being framed against them.

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HARTAL IN NORTH & EAST
MUSLIMS KILLED AND INJURED

The 'hartal' organised by the Tamil-Muslim United Front to protest against the opening up of the 'Israeli Interests' Section' in Colombo and the use of the Israeli Secret Service Mossad in Sri Lanka turned out to be a huge success.

The hartal was conducted in the north on 8 and 11 June and in the east from 8 to 11 June. All activities came to a grinding halt with the total paralysing of the transport services, and shops and schools closed.

There were well-attended demonstrations and in the eastern town of Kathankudy, where Muslims are a majority, the army – in an attempt to break up a demonstration – shot into the crowd, killing and injuring scores of people. All-India Radio announced that a number of Muslims were killed and others injured in this incident.

Mounting opposition

The opening of the Israeli mission has resulted in mounting opposition, particularly amongst the Muslim population and several protest marches have been staged.

At Puttalam, a city in the west coast of the island, 3,000 Muslims marched through the city centre, following their traditional Friday prayers.

As a result of violence against the Muslims in Badulla, there was a reported clash between some Muslim people and gangs of Sinhalese.

Dr M.C.M. Kaleel, a long-standing member of parliament and former Cabinet Minister of the present ruling party, has strongly condemned the re-establishment of relations with Israel. Dr Badudin Mohamed, another former minister and an influential Muslim leader, took a leading role in organising the hartal in the Eastern Province.

SRI LANKA'S COMPANY

Whatever else President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka may be accused of, not even his worst enemies say he suffers from a lack of certain ingeniousness. His handling of the Tamil problem in the northern provinces may have proved very clumsy.

He may have aggravated the problem by appearing to sail under the flag of Sinhala chauvinists rather than as the President of the whole island, its Tamil part included.

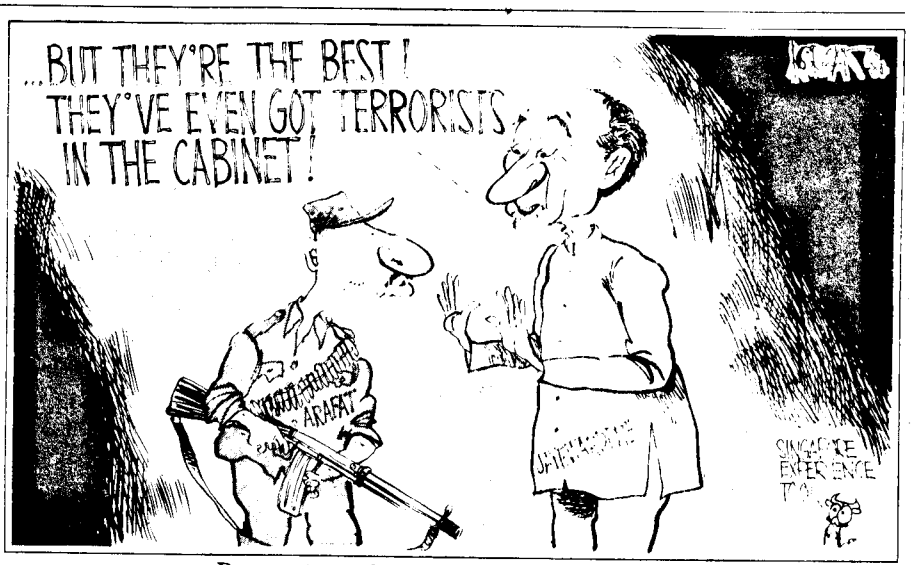
But when it comes to fighting terrorists, Jayawardene knows that nobody could do it better than Israel, a state born in terrorism, and living by terrorism.

The Sri Lanka government has formally announced the setting up of a limited Israeli presence in the capital Colombo to help fight the guerrillas in northern areas amid mounting criticism from the opposition parties and protests in the country. 'We will get help from the devil if we can,' said President Jayawardene in Hong Kong the other day in reply to a question whether Sri Lanka had sought Israel's help to fight the Tamil separatists.

Of course, there is nothing new in the move, for Tamil separatists have been hinting at an Israeli presence in the island directed against them ever since last year's ethnic riots.

According to PLO Ambassador in Colombo Khaireddin Abdul Rahman, more than 50 members of Mossad, Israel's intelligence organisation, are already in Sri Lanka helping the island's armed forces.

Sri Lanka, it may be noted, suspended diplomatic ties with Israel 14 years ago, calling it to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. But, according to Foreign Minister Shahul Hameed, the Vienna Convention provides for such an arrangement when two countries having no diplomatic relations wanted to conduct business with each other.



By courtesy of 'Far Eastern Economic Review', 14 June 1984

But what President Jayawardene and his foreign minister choose to forget and what the Arab states can't, except at great peril to their interests, is the fact that neither the country nor the 'business' involved is an ordinary one, even though we would be the last to deny terrorist credentials to Israelis both as individuals and as a state.

It is Sri Lanka's business whether it should have diplomatic relations with a country either openly or through the back door. It is again up to the government in Colombo whether they should open the most sensitive and vital organ of the state to penetration by an outsider.

But what the Arab states, in all fairness, can't refrain from pointing out is the danger involved in a country, which makes no secret of its hostility to Arabs and has been carrying out acts of vengeance against individual Arabs in isolated spots in Europe whenever it is not engaged in war against them as a nation, being allowed yet another base from which to operate.

Israel has killed many top Arab diplomats and Palestinian leaders through terrorist acts in various European capitals. So any attempts to have the sphere of Israeli influence extended is sure to conflict with the Arab interests and Sri Lanka's can be no exception.

In fact, considering the close economic and commercial relations between Sri Lanka and the Arab world, the danger is far greater and the implications of a Zionist presence more sinister, President Jayawardene may not mind spooning with the devil and proclaiming it unabashedly to the outside world.

But the Arabs have to, because for them it is a question of survival. So, sooner or later, he will have to make a choice between Israel and the Arabs and, in case he avoids making one, it will be the Arabs' painful duty to do it for him and in this they will be guided by the maxim that a country is best known by the company it keeps. Or is it by the company that keeps it?

(This article is reprinted from the Editorial Comment of the Saud Arabian 'ARAB NEWS', 2.6.84)

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ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA — 1883–1983 (1)

ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN SRI LANKA *CONTINUITY AND CHANGE*

These articles are based on a paper presented to a seminar of the Social Scientists Association and the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague) by Dr Kumari Jayawardena, Associate Professor, Colombo University, in December 1983. Reproduced by courtesy of the LANKA GUARDIAN.

By Kumari Jayawardena

Exactly one hundred years ago, in 1883, the Buddhists and Catholics were fighting each other on the streets of Colombo; in July 1983, there occurred the worst ethnic conflagration in the recent history of Sri Lanka, directed, this time, against the Tamils. These events and the experiences of similar outbursts against other minorities, prompt us to enquire into the persistence of such incidents in the colonial and post-colonial periods, and the reasons for both the growth of ethnic consciousness among all classes and the decline of class consciousness among the working people of all ethnic groups.

In Sri Lanka, there are differences between groups of people of a religious, linguistic and ethnic nature. The majority are Buddhist by religion and Sinhala by ethnicity, but the non-Sinhala minorities form 26% and the non-Buddhists 33% of the population. In the last one hundred years, violence has been directed against what have been called the 'un-Sinhala' (asinhala) and 'un-Buddhist' (abaudha) elements in Sri Lanka society.

This study is concerned with briefly examining the continuing manifestations of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism in relation to all other minority groups, and the form this has taken, in the past, against various religious and ethnic minorities and the hegemony of this ideology today among all social classes in Sri Lanka.

Recent themes

The literature and propaganda directed against the Tamils from the 1970s form an important source of information in analysing the recent phase of Sinhala Buddhist consciousness. I have taken some of the frequent themes of this literature and will show that similar ideas have existed in earlier periods, when the Sinhala Buddhists were in conflict with other non-Tamil, minority groups. The themes can be broadly classified as follows:

1. The doctrine of the primacy and superiority of the Sinhala 'race' as the original, true inhabitants of the island, linked to the myth that the Sinhalese were 'Aryan' migrants from Bengal.

A recent publication states:

'The Sinhalese race has a clearly documented unbroken history of over 2,500 years. There is no history older than the history of the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. That Sri Lanka belongs to the Sinhala race is not based on mythology or fables handed down from mouth to mouth. Ancient rock inscriptions, inscriptions in gold, huge vihares, and dagobas, huge statues of Lord Buddha sculptured out of rocks, huge tanks and irrigation systems all bear unshakeable witness to the heritage of the Sinhala race and Sinhala country . . .'

Translated from Kauda Kotiya? – *Who is the Tiger?* – undated 1980?

2. Associated with this is another concept based on the idea of a beleaguered land — the feeling that the Sinhalese are really a minority in the region, with no other country except Sri Lanka, unlike the other minority groups which have ethnic links with other countries.

'The Sinhalese have no other motherland other than Sri Lanka. The Indian trade union leaders, the Borah traders, other Indian traders, the Sindhi traders and most Tamil workers use Sri Lanka as a mine from which they obtain money and invest it in large houses and lands which they buy in the names of their children and close relatives, in India. All of them live with one foot in India and the other in Sri Lanka. Their only loyalty to Sri Lanka is as a gold-mine. They do not have any sympathy towards the Sinhalese culture, language, Buddhism or the traditional Sinhalese people.'

From *Sinhalayage Adisi Hatari* (The unseen enemy of the Sinhalese), 1970.

3. The concept that the Sinhala race has been placed in a special relationship to Buddhism as its protector. Appeals to save Buddhism from the 'infidels' or non-Buddhists are resorted to and in recent years, calls for a 'dharma yudhaya' (holy war) to protect Buddhist monuments and to preserve the Buddhist religion have been made.

'The link between the Sinhala race and Buddhism is so close and inseparable that it had led to the maxim, "There is no Buddhism without the Sinhalese and no Sinhalese without Buddhism." This is an undeniable fact. The literature of the Sinhalese is Buddhist literature. The history of the Sinhalese is the history of Buddhism. The language of the Sinhalese is enriched by the doctrine of the Buddha. The 'Era' of the Sinhalese is the 'Buddha Era'. The culture of the Sinhalese is Buddhist culture. The flag of the Sinhalese is the Sinhala Buddhist flag'.

'With the establishment of Buddhism, the Sinhala culture and civilisation took on a new orientation. The life of the Sinhalese began to be guided by Buddhism . . . Yet from a few years ago, there has been an organised movement of anti-Sinhala, anti-Buddhist barbarians to destroy our invaluable archeological ruins and Buddhist shrines . . . '

'Is is undoubtable that the future generations, as well as our forefathers who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of their race and for the glory of their religion, shall curse us for our silence. At least, now in the name of our race, in the name of our forefathers and in the name of the unborn generations, let us all direct our attention to this situation.'

Translated from *Sinhaluni, Budu Sasuna Bera Geniw!* (Sinhalese, save the Buddhist Region!), 1981.

It is on these concepts that the Sinhala Buddhist ideology assumes that Sri Lanka is the land of Sinhala Buddhists and that all other groups living in it are 'aliens', who are out to exploit the country and its peoples for their own gain, in the process of sullying the 'purity' and 'integrity' of the Sinhala Buddhist people. That this charge is now laid against the Tamils is evident from this recent quotation:

'Not only is this non-Sinhala minority group trying to destroy the rights of the Sinhalese people to their motherland in the most unjust manner but they also perpetrated numerous other injustices on the unsuspecting, innocent Sinhala masses.'

Translated from Kauda Kotiya? (op cit)

Other 'injustices'

Two of these other 'injustices' have figured largely in the fashioning of the Sinhala-Buddhist consciousness as it exists today.

A. The perception that foreign or minority-owned business ventures have retarded the development of

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Sinhala business; calls are therefore made for privileges for the Sinhala merchants and for measures against 'alien traders' —

'If this is a genuine national government, it should appoint a Commission to look into the unfortunate situation of the Sinhala traders as a result of the influence of the Indians, and take remedial measures. Also, in order to save the Sinhalese from the dangers created by foreigners, Indians, controlling trade and large plantations in this country, should be driven out forthwith.'

'In the central market in Colombo, in the Pettah, the local Sinhalese traders today do not own even 5% of the trade. Power is almost entirely in the hands of Indians, Borahs and Sindhis.'

'The export-import trade is completely in the hands of foreigners. A person who travels from Colombo Fort to Wellawatte could see how many Sinhdi shops there are on either side of the Galle Road. Every single one of these trading establishments was started after an independent government was set up in Sri Lanka in 1948.'

Translated from *Sinhalayage Adisi Hatura*, 1970.

B. There is a very prevalent view that the non-Sinhalese have an unfair share of government jobs, university places, etc. Suggestions are therefore made that recruitment to University should be on a system of ethnic quotas. To cite a popular document suggesting that Tamils entered the university illicitly —

'From the time the Peradenya University was set up, the ordinary people of this country have lost the opportunity of studying medicine, engineering and the other sciences. Who then were the students of Peradenyia University? They were Tamils?

'The cry that the educational facilities are the natural rights of the Sinhalese was raised by such eminent persons as Messrs. L.H. Methananda, Dr F.R. Jayasuriya, K.M.P.Rajaratna, who raised the issue in public. Because of this cry, they were labelled racists. When monks such as Baddegama Wimalawansa and Devamottawe Amarawansa, pointed out the injustice which was being perpetrated on the majority community, they were ridiculed and harassed. Today the majority community has realised how they have been deceived.'

Translated from *Visvavidyalayata Hora Para* (Illicit Entry into the University), 1970.

'. . . the important and serious question whether all the Tamil Medium students who entered the Medical, Engineering, Science and other Faculties did so by the good fortune of receiving improper excess marks comes compellingly into our minds. This is not only a burning question; it is also a question that painfully sears and violently explodes within the hearts of our Sinhala students, parents and teachers.'

From *Diabolical Conspiracy* — undated (1980?).

To understand these recent expressions of Sinhala Buddhist sentiment and to show in what way anti-minority feeling has been expressed over the years, some historical probing is relevant. Such an overview will show that although the ideology has remained more or less constant, the minority groups targetted for attack have been different over the years.

It will also be noted that ethnic and religious hostility has expanded at various periods among different classes in Sri Lanka. Although such animosity has always had a strong petty-bourgeois basis, this consciousness has also manifested itself at times among the Sinhala bourgeoisie and the working class. For this purpose, I first examine specific periods of conflict between the Sinhala Buddhists and four different minorities, namely, **Christian, Muslim, Malayali** and **Tamil**, and will try and relate these events to prevailing class tensions and conflicts.

DIVERSIONARY MOVEMENTS AGAINST CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

The anti-Christian Movement and the Sinhala Bourgeoisie

Ethnic and religious conflicts in Sri Lanka were among the factors which retarded the formation of a strong anti-imperialist consciousness, capable of uniting all ethnic groups in a joint liberation struggle. During the colonial period, such conflicts also, on many occasions, weakened the class consciousness of the working people, directing their energies in the wrong directions — against minorities, rather than against the class enemy.

While religious and cultural revival have often been the basis of incipient nationalist movements in the Third World, Buddhist revivalism in Sri Lanka (in the late 19th and early 20th century), used slogans of religion, culture and temperance, to mobilise people in anti-Christian agitation, attention was focussed on the privileges and alleged misdeeds of the Christian minority, instead of the colonial regime itself. Since, in addition, the majority of Christians were poor people, both Sinhala and Tamil, the movement became a distorted expression of 'national' sentiment, directed away from the real problem.

However, it is a fact that in colonial Sri Lanka, while foreign and local Christians (Catholics and Protestant) formed less than 10% of the population, the Christian elite dominated the political life of the country and held very privileged positions in society. To give a few examples, in the Legislative Council, from 1833 to 1912, the Low-Country Sinhalese representatives, who were appointed by the government, were (with one exception) Protestant Christian; a high percentage of the Sinhala and Tamil entrepreneurs, professional people and government servants were also Christians — the products of missionary schools.

Social advantages

The economic, political and social advantages held by Christians were especially resented by the newly emergent Sinhala Buddhist bourgeoisie, who financed the movement of Buddhist revival. The Buddhist petty bourgeoisie of small traders, white-collar workers, writers, journalists and teachers, with the support of the Buddhist monks, also opposed the hegemony of Christians in colonial society. These groups spearheaded the revivalist movement to promote Buddhist education, challenge missionary influence and to arouse national and patriotic feelings among the Sinhala Buddhists.

Bureaucrats and missionaries were attacked for their religion and the campaign was directed against the 'Christian' power rather than against British colonialism. Even if this was a tactic to avoid charges of sedition, it had the effect of arousing the Buddhists to a 'Holy War' instead of an anti-colonial struggle.

The anti-Christian movement was also linked with the rise of religious fervour and the belief that Sri Lanka and the 'dhammdvipa', island of the faith, with a historic destiny to protect Buddhism, this mission having been entrusted to the 'Aryan' Sinhala people by the Buddha himself. In this context, one can note that the creation of an ideology based on 'tradi-

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tional' values, emphasising the ethnic, religious and cultural identity of the Sinhala Buddhists, resulted in an aggressive campaign against Christians. The battles, both non-violent and violent, were fought at several levels.

1. Through public debates between Christians and Buddhists, as occurred in Panadura in 1873, when bhikku Migettuwatte Gunananda aroused Buddhist popular opinion by confronting Rev. David de Silva, and launching a searing attack on Christianity.

2. Through popular agitation, invective against Christians in the press, pamphlets, some 'blasphemous, others scurrilous and novels where the heroes were virtuous Buddhsts and the villains were Christians. Christianity was ridiculed, missionaries were referred to as 'enemies' teaching a 'degrading superstition' and complaints were made against 'ignorant catechists who infest our streets'.

3. Through the formation of Buddhist organisations, especially after the arrival in Sri Lanka, in 1880, of Colonel Olcott and Helena Blavatsky, who launched the Buddhist Theosophical Society to promote Buddhism and Buddhist education. In this period, the works of British radicals and freethinkers (Annie Besant, Charles Bradlaugh and G.W. Foote), were also circulated and the first issue of the *Ceylon Freethinker*, which appeared in 1883, had an article on 'The Evil Results of Missionary Education'.

Violent clashes

This ideological climate and the emotions generated by the revivalist movement, led to the first violent communal riot in Sri Lanka's modern history — the riot between Buddhists and Catholics in Kotahena, Colombo, in April 1883. The militant bhikku, Migettuwatte Gunananda, whose temple was close to St Lucia's Cathedral, had organised Buddhist ceremonies which coincided with Easter Week.

The Catholics took this as a provocation and a serious riot occurred; the street fighting caused one death and 30 were injured, including 12 policemen. The resulting Commission of Inquiry claimed that the causes were the conflicting religious festivities, the leadership of Gunananda — 'a bitter opponent of the Christian religion' — and the failure of the Catholics to control 'the more ignorant of their flock'.

In the next phase of anti-Christian agitation during the early 20th century, revivalist leaders such as **Anagarika Dharmaphala** and **Walisinha Harischandra** took the lead. Christianity was said to be the cause of a multitude of evils affecting society and a 'golden age' of Sinhala Buddhist culture was described, where there was no crime, violence or drunkenness. As Dharmapala wrote in 1902:

> 'This bright, beautiful island was made into a Paradise by the Aryan Sinhalese before its destruction was brought about by the barbaric vandals . . . Christianity and polytheism are responsible for the vulgar practices of **killing animals, stealing, prostitution, licentiousness, lying** and **drunkenness** . . . This ancient, historic, refined people, under the diabolism of vicious paganism, introduced by the British administrators is now declining and slowly dying away. The bureaucratic administrators . . . have cut down primeval forests to plant tea; have introduced opium, ganja, whisky, arrack and other alcoholic poisons; have opened saloons and drinking taverns in every village; have killed all industries and made the people indolent.'

Dharmapala and Harischandra also led a campaign for the protection of the Buddhist sacred sites in Anuradhapura and in June 1903, during the Buddhist poson festivities, they organised a protest against restrictions on Buddhist processions. There was anti-Christian rioting and Harischandra was arrested for incitement. The subsequent court case and his acquittal were the stimulus for an increase of religious fervour among Buddhists. Dharmapala petitioned the British King on this issue, stating:

> 'The Sinhala Buddhists are being persecuted by the subordinate officers of Your Majesty's Government . . . they resent interference where their holy historic religion is concerned . . . liquor, opium and beef are given to the village people by the administrators . . . the removal of liquor saloons, butcher shops and foreign churches from the Sacred City is what the Buddhists demand.'

Articulated hostility

The struggle against Christianity was thus, not a movement of the Sri Lankan masses against the foreign rulers of the country, but was rather a campaign led by sections of the Sinhala-Buddhists, who in their attempts to gain a greater share in the power and privileges of colonial society, aroused and articulated the hostility of the masses towards the privileged Christians.

Anti-Christian feelings have continued to break out into open agitation and conflict at various times in Sri Lanka. One important instance was in the late 1950s, when the Buddhist Commission was set up by a number of Buddhist organisations to look into alleged acts of discrimination against Buddhists and the Buddhist religion. Many of the old debates were revived and even scurrilous pamphlets of the turn of the century, like *Kanni Mariyage Hati* (The Truth about the Virgin Mary) were republished. While in recent years the people have been distracted by attacks on other minorities, it is nevertheless true that the anti-Christian prejudices, though dormant, still remain strong in the consciousness of Sinhala Buddhists.

The anti-Muslim agitation of the Sinhala merchants

Competition in trade is a key element in understanding ethnic and communal rivalry in Sri Lanka. By the last quarter of the 19th century, the colonial economy was dominated and controlled by British as well as North and South Indian merchant capital. A bourgeoisie of Sinhala, Sri Lanka Tamil and Muslims had also arisen. While the economic base of the Muslim bourgeoisie was trade, the Sri Lankan Tamil bourgeoisie derived their wealth from plantation cultivation and from services, mainly financial to the commercial sector; their Sinhala counterparts accumulated wealth in liquor renting, graphite mining and plantations.

However, the Sinhalese and Sri Lanka Tamils were not strong enough to compete with the British, Borahs, Sindhis, Parsis, Chettiars and Muslims in the export-import trade and in the large retail trade. Thus, as an alternative members of these two economically weak groups, competed for entry into the professions and government service. However, the small Sinhala traders were to become a vociferous pressure group which directed its hostility against 'alien' traders.

The weakness of the Sinhala and Sri Lanka Tamil entrepreneurs can be seen from the following figures taken from Fergusons Directory. In 1863, there were 33 leading merchants, exporters and importers, of whom 27 were Europeans, four were Indians from Bombay, the only Sri Lankans being P.B. Fernando and E. Nannytamby of Jaffna. By 1880, 54 leading merchants were listed, of whom 50 were European, two Parsis from Bombay and two Sinhalese (Charles de Soysa and Jeronis Pieris).

In the local commercial quarter (the Pettah), the trade in 1863 was dominated by 75 Nattukottal Chettiar firms (of South India) who were in the rice and cloth trade and 35 Muslim

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traders, who dealt in various goods. No Sinhala and Sri Lanka Tamil firms were mentioned for this year. By 1880, the Pettah trade was dominated by 86 Chetty and 64 Muslim firms, with only a handful of Sinhalese traders such as H. Don Carolis (furniture) and N.S. Fernando (stationery). By the 1890s, new groups of Muslim traders from Gujurat – the Borahs, Khojas and Memons – broke into the import-export trade, and became the new merchant princes who played a collective role as junior partners of the British.

Anti-Muslim propaganda and the 1915 riots

The hostility to this foreign domination of trade was expressed by the smaller Sinhala traders; the animosity, while being against all 'merchants from Bombay and peddlars from South India', as Dharmapala called them, was particularly against the Muslim traders of South India (known as Coast Moors), who were ubiquitous, being found in urban as well as rural areas, however remote. There was not only keen competition beteween the Muslims and the Sinhala shopkeepers and traders, but consumer hostility was also aroused against the Muslim shopkeepers, when as in 1915, wartime shortages and inflation led to a general rise in the price of essentials.

During the early 20th century, the concept of 'alien traders' was opposed to 'sons of the soil', was popularised in the Sinhala press, the main proponent being **Anagarika Dharmapala**, whose father, H. Don Carolis, was one of the few Sinhala shopowners in the Pettah; numerous Sinhala writers, dramatists, journalists and monks of this period wrote extensively, glorifying the heroic deeds of Sinhalese kings, recalling the victories against foreign invasions and also denouncing foreign traders and urging the Sinhalese to boycott their shops. In 1906, Dharmapala wrote:

'Aliens are taking away the wealth of the country and the sons of the soil, where are they to go? The immigrants who came here have other places to go to — the Sinhalese has no place to go. Is it just that the sons of the soil should suffer while the alien enjoys? England . . . has an Alien Prevention Bill to prevent paupers coming to her shores and the ignorant helpless Sinhalese villager is made a victim by the alien sharper who robs his ancestral land.'

During this period, Dharmapala's attacks were specifically directed against Muslim traders: in 1915 he wrote:

'The Muhammedans, an alien people . . . by Shylockean methods became prosperous like the Jews. The Sinhalese sons of the soil, whose ancesters for 2,358 years had shed rivers of blood to keep the country free from alien invaders are in the eyes of the British only vagabonds. The alien South Indian Muhammedan comes to Ceylon, sees the neglected villager, without any experience in trade . . . and the result is that the Muhammedan thrives and the son of the soil goes to the wall.'

Several other ideologues of the Sinhala petty bourgeoisie made provocative statements. The novelist **Piyadasa Sirisena**, who edited the *Sinhala Jathiya*, urged the Sinhalese to 'refrain from . . . transactions with the Coast Moor, the Cochin and the foreigner'. *The Lakmina*, a Sinhala daily, writing to the Coast Moors, said: 'A suitable plan should be adopted to send this damnable lot out of the country,' and the *Dinamina* condemned 'our inveterate enemies, the Moors'. Some editors of papers which carried such inflammatory statements were prosecuted and in 1915, the *Sinhala Jathiya* and Dharmapala's *Sinhala Bauddhaya* were banned.

'Summary justice' under martial law

It was against this background that the first serious riots between Sinhalese and Muslims occurred in 1915 in many parts of the country, ostensibly sparked off by religious provocations, but in reality reflecting the economic and political tensions of the period. Many hundreds died in rioting or in the 'summary justice' meted out by British troops against civilians under martial law.

Several middle-class Buddhist temperance leaders were imprisoned, including family members of Sinhala traders in the Pettah. D.E. Pedris (son of D.D. Pedris, the wealthy Pettah merchant) was court-martialled and shot on a charge of inciting crowds in the Pettah to attack Muslim shops; **Edmund Hewavitarna** (son of H. Don Carolis) died in jail after his death sentence was commuted, and **N.S. Fernando Wijesekera**, Pedris's brother-in-law and son of the Pettah Stationer, N.S. Fernando, also received a death sentence which was commuted.

The reaction of Anagarika Dharmapala to these riots was revealing. Writing a month after the events, he said:

'What the German is to the Britisher . . . the Muhammedan is to the Sinhalese. He is an alien to the Sinhalese by religion, race and language. To the Sinhalese without Buddhism death is preferable. The British officials may shoot, hang, quarter, imprison or do anything to the Sinhalese but there will always be bad blood between the Moors and the Sinhalese. **The peaceful Sinhalese have at last shown that they can no longer bear the insults of the alien. The whole nation in one day has risen against the Moor People. The causes are economic and spiritual.'**

Open conflict

In subsequent years, open conflict between Buddhists and Muslims died down, but the anti-minority feelings of the Sinhala traders persisted in the consciousness of the Sinhala Buddhists. This was recently seen not only by largely localised outbursts of violence against Muslims, such as occurred in Putalam and Galle in 1981, but also by the content of much Sinhala chauvinist propganda of recent times. However, it is noteworthy that antagonism has continued to be less on religous lines and more on the basis of trade rivalry.

We see that many of the themes of the anti-Tamil propaganda of the 1970s and 1980s had their origin in the consciousness of an earlier periodd, when they were used against Christians and Muslims. The most persistent have been the assertions of Sinhala racial superiority and the special role of the Sinhalese to protect Buddhism, the hostility to 'alien traders', the concern for the 'sons of the soil', and the much-repeated lament, which was voiced in the *Ceylon Nation* at the turn of the century, that 'the Sinhalese are isolated; they are between the Devil and the deep sea; they have no other land to go to, they have no ethnological relationship with any other existing race or country.'

It will be observed that the ideologies on which antagonism towards the Christians and the Muslims were nourished primarily served petty-bourgeois interests. But such ideologies, in specific circumstances, become the dominant ideology and attract other classes as well.

In spite of the growth of solidarity and joint action by its different ethnic components, the emerging working-class in Sri Lanka also at times fell prey to this Sinhala Buddhist ideology. The conflicts with minorities in which the working class, as a result, became involved, will be discussed in the next article.

To be continued

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FIRST THE TAMILS, NOW THE MUSLIMS

It was no secret to any politically minded person that when the pogrom against the Tamils was unleashed in Sri Lanka, it was only a matter of time before the Sinhala chauvinist regime of President Jayawardene, in its march towards fascism, would signal the subjugation of the other minorities.

Even before the blood of the Tamils had dried from the streets of Sri Lanka, the Muslim community of Sri Lanka has been singled out for the next orgy of violence and anarchy.

It is a fact that during the darkest hours of July 1983, when President Jayawardene's 'inner Cabinet' met to hide the blood-stained trail of sections of the government and to find a scapegoat for the pogrom, A.C.S. Hameed, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had resisted tooth and nail the plot to close down the embassies of the USSR and GDR in Sri Lanka and even threatened to resign and tell the 'truth' to the people.

Not only did Hameed's stand incense the chauvinist caucus within the government, but it also accelerated their plan to attack the Muslim community.

Within a matter of days, the commencement of this plan was obvious when the President's brother, Mr H.W. Jayawardene, a lawyer in private practice, who up to then did not have a place either in the legislature or the bureaucracy, was handpicked to meet the Indian premier, and then undertake a tour of the ASEAN countries as the President's special envoy to explain the Tamil problems to the leaders of those countries.

Foreign jaunts

This was in spite of the fact that it was President Jayawardene who for the first time in the history of Sri Lanka, had delegated the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, usually held by the Prime Minister, to Mr Hameed, with instructions to other ministers to cut down on their foreign jaunts and to allow Mr Hameed to deal with Foreign Affairs problems arising out of their ministries, as far as possible.

These instructions were carried out, with the result that in the Sri Lankan Parliament Hameed was taunted by the Opposition, as returning to Sri Lanka only to change his suit.

Not only was Hameed grounded in Colombo and virtually functioning like a Minister without Portfolio, in the Department of Immigration and Emigration which came under him, the trade union wing of the ruling party, controlled by the notoriously chauvinist Ministers Cyril Mathew and Gamini Dissanaike, began to over-assert itself, eroding his powers and reducing him to the status of a puppet.

Posters and handbills began to appear all over the country threatening to put an end to the powerful trade and commerce bases held by the Muslims. Muslim citizens began receiving threatening letters. Rumours were let loose about impending attacks on mosques and time and again the Muslim community had to take up strategic positions at the mosque, taking turns at Jumma prayers on Fridays.

In particular, the electorate of Akurana, represented by Mr Hameed, was singled out for a concerted sabre-rattling.

Another leading Muslim Parliamentarian of the ruling Party, who had also served as a Mayor of Colombo, was openly impeached in Parliament by the UNP Prime Minister, who produced files and documents relating to matters that occurred nearly three decades ago to try to establish that Mr Jabir Cader, while serving as a UNP Mayor of Colombo, had connived with a then leading UNP

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Minister — Mr Sugathadasa, to obtain concessions to further his business interests.

The attack on the Muslims had begun.

Thus it was clearly as much a desire to devalue and disagrace the Muslim community, if not more, than to combat the Tamil guerrillas that the government invited the Israelis to function under the umbrella of the US embassy, after having recognised Palestinian rights and stuck to the policy of no diplomatic relations with Israel for one full term in office.

That was the last straw for the Muslims who were well aware that they would be the next target after the Tamils.

Hundreds of Muslims demonstrated on the streets of Colombo to express their protest against inviting the Israelis back to Sri Lanka. Thousands of Muslims demonstrated at Puttalam. Tamil students of the University of Jaffna staged a demonstration sympathising with the Muslim sentiment and protesting against inviting the Israelis. This was gathering momentum.

The scene shifted to Kaththankudy, a predominantly Muslim village in the Eastern Province. It is said that government troops opened fire at a massive demonstration by Muslims killing and wounding many.

Unofficial sources put the death toll at 30. A rigorous press censorship, applicable even to foreign correspondents, has been clamped down by the government.

'Foreign correspondents were brought under the scope of extremely strict and wide-ranging censorship yesterday under emergency regulations,' says a despatch received by *The Times* on June 12, 1984, from its correspondent based in Colombo.

S.C.O.T. TO CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN & TAMIL RIGHTS

At a general meeting of members held on May 20, the Standing Committee of Tamils adopted a comprehensive resolution to campaign against the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka.

To SCOT, which had hitherto concentrated on work connected with relief and rehabilitation of displaced persons and performed functions which could be classified as charitable, this decision represents a remarkable change of direction.

However, the resolution adopted makes it clear that its campaign for the restoration of the rights of Tamils and human rights violations in Sri Lanka will not in any way impede its work in connection with relieving poverty and suffering among the Tamil people.

SCOT has set up a separate division called 'SCOT-Human Rights Council' to undertake its new functions.

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MEDIA FILE

PAK-US ARMS FLOOD LANKA TO FIGHT TAMILS

by ANAND K. SAHAY

Sri Lanka has imported considerable quantities of ammunition between January and April which, in retrospect, could only have been in preparation for the military clampdown on the northern Tamil province of Jaffna which was to take place in April. This is clear from the type of ammunition obtained from foreign sources.

Diplomatic sources, in a fairly detailed account of the imports, said these were made available from the US and Pakistan, the overwhelming bulk from the latter.

The imports suggest a definite planning over a period of time by the Sri Lanka government to deal with the Tamil claim that the military build-up in Jaffna province followed an attack on a group of air force men by Tamil extremists.

Guns & gas

The first shipment arrived aboard the *Dhaulagiri*, carrying about ten cartons of revolvers and gas guns. This was on January 24. About three weeks later, 50 cases arrived carrying 7.62 and 5.56 SLR (semi-automatic self-loading rifles) blanks aboard the *Lanka Attila*.

The biggest consignment of the month came with the *Lanka Amila* on February 20. It included 50,000 RDX (research department Formula 'X' cartridge) .22 tonnes and .38 STW 125, and 50,000 RDX 12-bore SG and 50,000 RDX 12-bore No.4.

In March, there was only one consignment of tear gas grenades carried aboard the *President Van Brenof*.

The bulk of the ammunition import came in April. By then the all-party round table conference (RTC) had been unilaterally deserted by the ruling United National Party, and martial law was imposed in Jaffna.

Blockade bid

On April 9 a case containing pyrotechnics (flares) to light up dark areas at night before firing is resorted to was imported on the Lanka Ajitha.

The biggest consignment of the entire four-month period came on April 19 aboard the *Lanka Amitha*. In all, the ship carried 49,000 RDX cartridges. These included 50,000 RDX cartridges 9MM paralellum, 50,000 RX 9MM paralellum, 50,000 RDX cartridges 7.62MM (NATO type), 5,000 RDX cartridges 7.66MM blanks (NATO type), 80,000 RDX .38 special with metal paint round-bore bullet, and 150,000 RDX 9MM paralellum with full jacket. The last reported consignment on board the *Prince Markinly* brought in five cartons of ammunition on April 24.

Barring the *President Van Brenof* and the *Prince Markinly*, all the other ships are understood to have sailed from Karachi.

The ammunition imports are in addition to the patrol boats that the Sri Lanka government has obtained from China to put a naval blockade around the northern and eastern provinces of the island.

(By courtesy of BLITZ, 26.5.84)

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RIOT VICTIMS START NEW LIFE

A Methodist Minister and his wife are starting a new life in West Oxfordshire after losing their home during the recent riots in Sri Lanka.

Mr Swaminathan Jacob and his wife Joyce fled from their home in the capital, Colombo, before it was burned down by Sinhalese rioters. They escaped with just the clothes they were wearing and had to shelter with neighbours as a gang of 100 rioters attacked their house.

The couple, who come from the minority Tamil community, then had to hide in a darkened room for hours when the rioters returned to look for them in the neighbour's house. 'If they had found us they would have killed us. That was the fate of many other Tamils,' said Mr Jacob.

The couple eventually escaped and were taken to a refugee camp. Mrs Jacob left for London where their two children live, and Mr Jacob followed later.

Now they are setting up a new home in Carterton where Mr Jacob has just been appointed minister of the local Methodist church.

'We are very happy to be here,' said Mrs Jacob at their house in Barford Road. 'We lost everything last summer when the riots broke out, but are now looking forward to starting afresh.'

The couple had returned to Sri Lanka in 1981 after a six-year spell working for the Methodist Church in London. Mr Jacob, who was secretary of the Sri Lankan Methodist conference, said: 'The situation between the Tamils and the majority Sinhalese had been building up for years but the riots took everyone by surprise.'

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RACE & CLASS

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KIDNAPPING ACHIEVED POSITIVE PUBLICITY

From the standpoint of Jaffna itself, things appear differently. With an army of occupation in Jaffna town, the language, job prospects, life itself under threat, the people of Jaffna cannot conceivably be expected to comply with the VIth amendment and put the thought of a separate state out of their minds.

The creation of a miniature Pakistan in the North and East of Ceylon may not seem a particularly desirable goal, but it is not unnatural that the Ceylon Tamil people who have had their traditional homelands, their culture and the prospects of their children systematically encroached upon over the last 35 years, should aspire in the end to a separate state and resort in the end to violent methods of achieving it.

The kidnapping of two young Americans which took place on May 10th, however, has had a uniquely peaceful outcome. It is, I believe, the only instance of kidnapping where the hostages have voluntarily been released, unconditionally and unharmed.

The Minister of National Security has claimed the outcome as a triumph for himself and his government. However, it is clear that the Tamil Nationalists were firmly in control throughout and have achieved four major advantages through this clever exercise.

Statesman-like

(1) The governments of India and Tamil Nadu were seen by the Sinhalese people to co-operate with the government of Sri Lanka during these events in a statesman-like and responsible way. Initially a ransom demand was made for Rs.50 million (£1¼ million) to be paid in gold to the government of Tamil Nadu. Naturally, the Tamil Nadu government firmly rejected this fantasy. Both Indian and Tamil Nadu governments called for the release of the hostages.

(2) Secondly, the Nationalists demonstrated their control of the Jaffna peninsula. Significantly, the hostages were not taken across to Tamil Nadu but kept quite near Jaffna under the nose of the Sinhalese army of occupation.

They were delivered into the hands of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Jaffna, at Bishop's House in Jaffna, thus ensuring that they were not found by the police or army, killed and their deaths blamed on the Nationalists.

(3) The question of CIA involvement in the Northern and Eastern province was highlighted again. A few days before the kidnapping it had been suggested in the Sri Lankan press that the **American financed land water scheme** in the Jaffna peninsula — the project on which the kidnapped couple were employed — was a CIA front for the detailed mapping of the peninsula.

World press

(4) The plight of political detainees in Sri Lanka was again brought to the notice of the world press. The kidnappers' demand was for the release of 20 detainees. It was soon revealed that only 16 of the people named were at present in detention.

In view of the provisions of the PTA for the disposal of bodies without an inquest, sinister doubts arise about the missing four. Two of the remaining sixteen, who were later followed by the rest, while not condemning the kidnapping, said that they did not wish to be released under such circumstances, showing themselves to be responsible and high-minded people whom it would be inept to label terrorists.

Even the Sri Lankan papers carried the headline 'Happy Ending to the Kidnap Drama'. The exercise has succeeded in achieving useful and positive publicity for the Tamil Nationalists of Sri Lanka.

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'IN THE NAME OF CIVILISATION'

By UPALI COORAY

The drama surrounding the kidnapping of Mr and Mrs Allen by armed youths is now over. No doubt many people, including supporters and advocates of Eelam, will have been relieved by the release of the Allens unharmed.

Although the Minister of National Security and the Government may now try to take the credit for their release, they are not likely to succeed. Clearly the government has come out worst in this whole episode. Firstly, it was a severe blow to the 'tough military' image it was trying to create.

Alienation

For four long days, the youths were able to hold the Allen couple without the security forces being able to detect their hide-out. This conclusively proves, contrary to the claims of Mr Athulathmudali, that the security forces in the North cannot obtain any information from the civilian population there. The alienation of the Tamil-speaking people of the North from the UNP is now total and complete.

Secondly, the public at large cannot but fail to recognise the different attitudes of Mr Athulathmudali before and after the release of the Americans'; people will distinguish between the pompous statements and histrionics of the Minister after the Allens were released and his meek whinings during the uncertain hours and minutes that ticked away before the Monday noon deadline. **In one small operation, the armed youth in Jaffna had exposed the true character of the new 'National Security' Minister.**

Finally, the various appeals and speeches Mr Athulathmudali made during this period only helped to spotlight the moral bankruptcy of the government. For instance, when he described the kidnappings as 'barbaric', it bommeranged on him.

What is more barbaric than the killing and burning alive of hundreds if not thousands of innocent Tamils in July 83. Or was it more gruesome than the vile murders of 52 detainees, including Dr Rajasunderam, whilst they were being held in State custody?

And is it more barbaric than the incarceration without trial of several hundred persons including Father Singarayer — named the Prisoner of the Month by Amnesty International and Nirmala Nithiyananthan, who need urgent medical treatment, for months and years?

Kind treatment

On the other hand, the Allens could state very clearly that they were very well treated whilst they were being held by the armed youths. In this context the kidnapping of Mr and Mrs Allen seems a very tame affair compared to the monstrous and inhuman acts I have listed above. It is of interest that neither Mr Athulathmudali nor anyone else in the government had described those acts as 'barbarous'.

The armed youth who kidnapped the American couple had treated them in a very humane manner whilst they were in their custody. And they responded to world public opinion and released them. Can we say the same of Mr Athulathmudali's government? For instance, despite various representations made by the Amnesty International, International Commission of Jurists and others, Mr Athulathmudali and his government still permit the Security forces to dispose of dead bodies of persons killed by the army, navy, air force, etc., without post mortems being held to determine the cause of death, the identity of the deceased and the circumstances surrounding his or her death.

Again, despite protests from many organisations and individuals – both local and international – the government retains the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, which permits the detention incommunicado of persons without trial in a place determined not by the Courts but by the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence!

Scant regard

Mr Athulathmudali's party and the government have shown scant regard to the rule of law. And we need not confine ourselves to their policies in the North and East of the country. We only need to recall a few incidents such as 'Pavidi Handa' case, the Vivienne Goonewardene's fundamental rights case, the demonstration organised outside the houses of Supreme Court Judges, the assault on Professor Sarathchandra and others, killing of Somapala, and so on; the list is endless.

That is why, when Mr Athulathmudali appealed to the kidnappers to free the Allen couple in the name of 'civilisation', it sounded like a sick joke. Mr Athulathmudali and his government have forfeited the right to speak on behalf of any civilisation or in the name of humanity or even common decency. The best service that Mr Athulathmudali and the government can do for Civilisation is to bow out now before things get even worse.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TAMIL IN *TAMIL TIMES!*

Sir,

I have been a subscriber to *Tamil Times* for a long time and I enjoy reading it. Like me, there are many people who anxiously wait for their copy to drop through the letterbox. *Tamil Times* is filling a great vacuum that existed previously.

It is my feeling, however, that the time is now ripe for a change in format and contents in order that the paper might capture a wider audience, young and old, both here and overseas.

Its survival and expansion can be best achieved by striking the right balance for all its readers, Tamils and non-Tamils, politically motivated or not. It should also cater for those Tamils who understand and speak only Tamil. It should promulgate new thoughts, actions and programmes for the long-term survival of the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

To make it more attractive it should incorporate news of all the Tamil communities around the world. Could not a piece of fiction or a book of a serious kind be serialised? Why cannot we have a women's page? The reading public should be asked for their views on these new features and any additional ones such as information about 'do it yourself' activities, home computers, legal and insurance questions, etc.

It is a well-known fact that a journal such as yours cannot survive on subscriptions alone. May I suggest that you sponsor world-wide Tamil cultural events and conventions, and the profit from these be channelled into your Development Fund. Let us all help in making *Tamil Times* the mouthpiece of the entire Tamil nation now scattered over the four corners of the globe.

Yours faithfully,
T. Visvendran,
Stevenage, Herts.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Please permit me to make a correction to the idea suggested by C. Jeyaratnam in his letter (*Tamil Times*, May 1984). In principle I agree with his suggestion of nominating the late Dr Rajasuntharam for the Nobel Peace Prize. However, it is unfortunate that this suggestion cannot materialise since only living individuals can be nominated for this coveted prize.

Sachi. Sri Kantha.
Urbana, USA

FIRST TAMIL CENTRE IN CANADA

It was on the 20th of May 1984, the first Tamil Centre, known as 'Thamilar Centre', was opened by the Thamilar Olli Association, in the city of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The centre is located at 2325, Centre Street, Montreal, Quebec. This centre has a theatre, a recreation hall and a Tamil library with an office for its over-all administration — providing help daily, except on Monday, from 9am to 9pm. Various programmes, like educational seminars, free language classes, Tamil movies, are being organised in the centre.

It is our wish this centre may expand to receive a good number of Tamils to sustain their cultural, educational, social and psychological needs. Your assistance of any sort is greatly welcomed to build up this centre, and right now, our efforts are geared towards building up our library. Your contribution by way of even used Tamil magazines, storybooks, Tamil literature, etc., may be sent to Thamilar Centre, 2325 Centre Street, Montreal, P.Q. H3K IJ6, Canada.

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AUSTRALIASIAN FEDERATION OF TAMILS

Tamil associations from Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Canberra, Adelaide, Darwin, North Queensland, Brisbane, Newcastle, Tasmania, Fiji, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, have got together and formed a single organisation called the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations.

The several associations which met on April 21, 1984, resolved that the Federation would pursue the following objectives:

1). To provide means of regular consultations between member associations.
2). To promote collective action by member associations when recommended by the federation as desirable.
3). The Federation shall receive finance from member groups for the following: (a) running of the Federation; (b) special projects.
4). It was intended that the following activities will come within the scope of the Federation.
(a). Co-ordination of activities.
(b). Pooling and dissemination of information.
(c). Encourage and promote unity among Tamils.
(d). To undertake projects and finance them.
(e). To provide relief to Tamil refugees.
(f). Delegation of responsibilities to member associations.
(g). To expose violation of human rights and to support human rights organisations.
(h). To consider any other activities suggested by member associations.

Professor C.J. Eliezer, Dr Bala Karalapillai, Mr Ilango Navaratnam and Mr K. Somasundaram, were elected President, Secretary, Communication Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, of the Federation. All communications should be addressed to The Secretary, P.O. Box 103, Glenhuntly 3163, Victoria, Australia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The article under the title 'A Military Thrust Towards Final Solution' which appeared in the April 1984 issue of *Tamil Times* was a reprint of a Special Focus published and distributed by the Tamil Information Centre, London. We regret that this acknowledgement was inadvertently omitted. — Editor, *Tamil Times*

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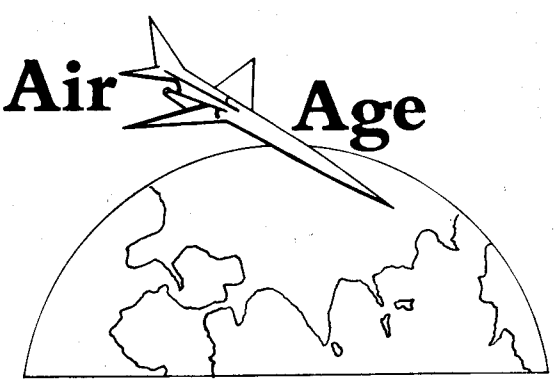

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ATTACK ON TAMIL UNDERGRADS WAS RACIST AND PRE-PLANNED

In May 1983, two months before the July violence against the Tamils, Tamil university students were subjected to violence by organised gangs and forcibly chased away. At that time the state-controlled Sri Lankan media published reports about alleged discovery of 'Eelam and terrorist literature' in the campus and claimed that Tamil students gave provocation by erasing Sinhalese lettering on some road signs.

However, the truth was otherwise and has now been revealed in a report of a three-member Commission — it was an organised, pre-planned racist attack designed and intended to convert the Peradeniya University into a 'Sinhalese-only University' through the eviction of Tamil students by violent means.

But the question is:

Why have the authorities at the University of Peradeniya, or for that matter, the Ministry of Higher Education, not published the report on the violent disturbances on that campus during May–June 1983?

The credentials of the three Commissioners, Messrs K.M. de Lanerolle (Chairman), Professor D. Calnaido, and the UNP Deputy Mayor of Kandy, Mrs Chandra Ranaraja, are impeccable. None of them could be accused of being anti-government or anti-establishment. Appointed on 18 May 1983, they submitted their detailed two-volume report on 6 December 1983 — but its contents have remained a dark secret ever since.

'Organised campaign'

The Commissioners say that the violent disturbances on the campus 'did not erupt spontaneously but represented an organised campaign' whose features 'all show careful planning'.

The purpose of the campaign, say the Commissioners, 'may be described as racist' and 'was to evict the Tamils from the campus. In complete defiance of authority and acting with blatant violence, the attackers succeeded in achieving their ends.'

'The attackers carried sticks, staves, iron rods, bicycle chains, belts, knives, arms and legs of university furniture, and even a human humerus.

'The following offences were committed: intimidation, disorderly conduct, unlawful assembly, stoning of halls, abuse, wilful damage to property, looting, restraint, forcible entry, incitement to violence, physical and psychological violence.'

The Commissioners identify a number of persons as responsible for and taking part in this racist violence. It would be interesting to know what action, if any, has been taken against them. One learns that a certain student, named as a ringleader, has since – following the example set by the government – been promoted and is now an acting Assistant Lecturer.

Scathing exposure

The main reason for the suppression of the report is, perhaps, its scathing exposure of the effeteness of the university authorities, and the manner in which they allowed the conditions that led to this violence to develop to flash-point.

'In the University of Peradeniya,' they say, 'there are many authorities but no authority.'

'Or again: 'The authorities do not seem to know what student welfare means.' And, finally: 'The bleak and unrewarding conditions under which 4,000 students now live are slowly but surely alienating from each other the very two sectors of this University which should be working in comradeship.

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Many medical, para-medical and maintenance personnel will be required for these hospitals when they were completed.

Many knowledgeable Sri Lankans here feel that experienced Sri Lankans will stand a good chance of securing employement in this medical complex if proper contacts are made before it is too late.

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